

AHRQ's Primary Care Practice Facilitation Forum

This email newsletter is the first step in building a learning network for individuals with an interest in practice facilitation. We will use this listserve to share perspectives on questions and answers submitted by learning forum members, as well as resources, research articles, and events of interest.

Perspectives from the Field May 18, 2012

How does a facilitation program use local learning collaboratives to reinforce its work with practices?

Below are some perspectives from two PF experts:

- *Katie Coleman, MSPH, MacColl Center for Health Care Innovation at Group Health Research Institute*
- *Lisa Letourneau, MD, MPH, Quality Counts*

Other programs are likely to have different perspectives, depending on their focus, context, and other factors. How does your experience compare?

Katie Coleman: Learning collaboratives and practice facilitation are highly complementary strategies for quality improvement. Like great wine and chocolate, these two strategies, when paired, can enhance each other.

While practice facilitation provides teams with individualized guidance, learning collaboratives can provide a helpful, shared framework and rhythm to the change initiative. To make the most of your time together, be sure to focus on doing things you can't do one-on-one.

1. **Share data.** Tracking data is a powerful way for teams to identify what's working and what's not. When those data are shared in a collaborative learning environment, teams can look to those that are demonstrating improvement and ask 'how'd you do that?' It creates a focused way to learn from positive deviation.
2. **Provide lots of time for teams to talk.** Team sharing through presentations, storyboards, table-talk conversations, or facilitated group discussions may be one of the most valuable parts of learning collaboratives. In addition to hearing strategies that similar teams used to generate improvement, talking to peers can help normalize the often difficult change process. It can be a great motivator for teams that are struggling to see their peers finding success.
3. **Bring in topic experts to provide insights on an area where teams are stuck, or to present content in a new or fresh way.** Getting teams all together provides an efficient – and cost effective- way to provide new information. Hiring an expert on new concepts like empanelment or advanced access and allowing plenty of time for questions and answers can be a great use of learning collaborative time and resources.
4. **Provide contact information for participants.** At their best, learning collaboratives can create an on-going network of quality improvement-minded teams that wouldn't

otherwise be connected. These relationships can last well beyond a single initiative and can evolve into a community asset for improvement.

Learning collaborative meetings can be a simple three-hour event over dinner or a two day, multi-track conference. Whether simple or complex:

- ✓ Make it easy for practices to participate. Be mindful of the location and timing of the meetings to improve attendance. Some groups even offer funding to help offset costs for hourly staff or for teams that may have to close their offices in order to attend.
- ✓ Actively involve all practice facilitators in the planning and execution of the learning collaborative meetings to ensure they are aligned with the teams' needs in terms of timing, content, and format.

Lisa Letourneau: The Maine PCMH Pilot is a multi-payer pilot that includes 26 primary care practices working to transform practice to a more patient-centered model of care. The Pilot conveners encourage each practice to work with an external QI coach or practice facilitator, and sponsor a learning collaborative that includes three day-long learning sessions each year.

Through the Pilot and the Maine Practice Improvement Network (MPIN), we encourage QI coaches supporting Pilot practices to share challenges and lessons learned through regular in-person meetings and monthly coaching calls. We also encourage coaches to attend the PCMH learning sessions with their practice team leaders, and to use the learning sessions as an opportunity to work directly with their practice teams and build relationships.

What do you think?

Please join the discussion by sending your thoughts to us at PracticeFacilitation@mathematica-mpr.com . Your responses will be compiled and shared in weekly newsletters.

Upcoming Event

Practice Facilitation Webinar- Part III

Wednesday, May 30th, 12:30-2:00 pm EDT **Save the Date!**

Title: Designing and Evaluating Your Facilitation Work

Description: In this Webinar, presenters will tackle key questions in designing practice facilitation programs and evaluating their effectiveness. These questions include:

- What are emerging “best practices” in practice facilitation program designs?
- What are the essential elements of a facilitation intervention?
- How do you create an internally consistent program?
- How do you evaluate its effectiveness?

- What do you need to know about the internal quality improvement processes for your program?

Webinar Registration Link:

<https://mathematicampr.webex.com/mathematicampr/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=666794899>

Resources

Check out the [PCPF Updates page](#) at the PCMH Resource Center (www.pcmh.ahrq.gov).

We've posted information about upcoming learning opportunities, previous editions of the PCPF eNewsletter, and slides and audio from the Practice Facilitation Webinars. Please visit the PCMH Resource Center at www.pcmh.ahrq.gov to explore white papers, briefs, a searchable citations database, and other resources related to the Patient-Centered Medical Home and primary care improvement.

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